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## In fiery speech to Congress, Netanyahu vows 'total victory' in Gaza and denounces U.S. protesters

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER,  
FARNOUSH AMIRI and  
ASHRAF KHALIL  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed "total victory" against Hamas and condemned American opponents of the war in Gaza on Wednesday in a scathing speech to Congress boycotted by dozens of Democratic lawmakers and protested by thousands seeking an end to the war and the humanitarian crisis created by it.

Netanyahu's combative speech offered no sign that his visit to the United States — his first trip abroad since the war started — could bring some progress in months of U.S.-led media-

tion for a cease-fire and hostage-release, as the Biden administration has hoped. Speaking for nearly an hour to frequent applause from U.S. lawmakers, as well as stony silence from many leading Democrats in the chamber, Netanyahu said the U.S. has a shared interest in his country's fight against Hamas and other Iran-backed armed groups. "America and Israel must stand together. When we stand together something really simple happens: We win, they lose," said Netanyahu, who wore a yellow pin expressing solidarity with the Israeli hostages held by Ha-

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Washington Metropolitan Police clear demonstrators from blocking traffic, Wednesday, July 24, 2024, in Washington, ahead of a scheduled visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the U.S. Capitol.

Associated Press

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# In fiery speech to Congress, Netanyahu vows 'total victory' in Gaza and denounces U.S. protesters

Continued from Front

But the Israeli leader soon pivoted to a darker tone as he derided those protesting the war on college campuses and elsewhere in the U.S., gesturing to demonstrations happening on the streets outside the Capitol. He called protesters "useful idiots" for Israel's adversaries. Some hostages freed from Gaza and families of those still in captivity listened in the House chamber. Security removed protesters in the gallery who rose to display T-shirts with slogans demanding an end to the war and the freeing of remaining hostages.

One member, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian-American serving Congress, took it a step further, holding up a sign that said "WAR CRIMINAL" on one side and "GUILTY OF GENOCIDE." Tlaib has been one of Netanyahu's most strident critics in Congress and was censured for her comments last year against the Israel-Hamas war, which has killed more than 39,000 in Gaza.

She has relatives in the West Bank and represents a district in Michigan with many Palestinian Americans.

Netanyahu made little or no mention of efforts by the United States and Arab allies to negotiate an end to the fighting and a release of surviving hostages seized



**Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to a joint meeting of Congress at the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, July 24, 2024.**

Associated Press

by Hamas-led militants in the Oct. 7 attack that started the war. He accused the numerous protesters of the war in the United States of standing with the militants who he said killed babies in Hamas' attack on Oct. 7.

"These protesters that stand with them, they should be ashamed of themselves," he said.

Netanyahu — who is frequently accused of wading into U.S. politics in favor of conservative and Republican causes — started his remarks with praise of President Joe Biden. But he turned to lavishing praise on former

president and current presidential contender Donald Trump "for all he's done for Israel."

Netanyahu is scheduled to meet with Biden and Harris on Thursday, and with Trump at Mar-a-Lago on Friday. Rep. Jamie Raskin, a Democrat from Maryland, said Netanyahu's speech was made for Trump's GOP. "We didn't hear anything about meaningful progress towards a bilateral ceasefire in return for hostages. We didn't hear anything about peace. We didn't hear anything about a two-state solution, which has been U.S.

foreign policy for decades," he said.

Delivering the speech during Israel's evening prime time, Netanyahu also had an eye on the audience back home. Netanyahu, whose popularity has plummeted from its pre-war levels, aimed to portray himself as a statesman respected by Israel's most important ally and welcomed in the corridors of Washington. That task is complicated by Americans' increasingly divided views on Israel and the war, which has emerged as a key issue in the U.S. presidential election. Tall steel barriers ringed the

Capitol Wednesday, and police deployed pepper spray as thousands of protesters rallied, denouncing Netanyahu as a "war criminal" and calling for a cease-fire.

The appearance made Netanyahu the first foreign leader to address a joint meeting of Congress four times, surpassing Winston Churchill.

House Speaker Mike Johnson gave Netanyahu a warm welcome. More than 60 Democrats and political independent Bernie Sanders boycotted Netanyahu's speech. The most notable absence was right behind him: Vice President Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate, said a long-scheduled trip kept her from attending.

The next Democrat in line, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, declined to attend, so Sen. Ben Cardin, the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, served as "senator pro tempore" in place of her.

Trump's running mate, Sen. JD Vance, was also a no-show for Netanyahu's speech, citing the need to campaign. Crowds of demonstrators near the Capitol protested the war's high civilian death toll. Others condemned Netanyahu's inability to free Israeli and American hostages taken by Hamas and other militants during the Oct. 7 attack that sparked the war. □



**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Federal Aviation Administration said Wednesday it will increase minimum rest time between shifts for air traffic controllers after highly publicized close calls between planes that were

following orders from controllers.

The FAA and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, the union representing the workers, agreed to a number of changes that will apply as schedules are

## FAA agrees with air traffic controllers' union to give tower workers more rest between shifts

negotiated for next year. "The science is clear that controller fatigue is a public safety issue, and it must be addressed," FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker said. He promised more measures to address tired controllers.

Rich Santa, president of the controllers' union, said the group has been raising concern about fatigue for years. He said the agreement "will begin to provide relief to this understaffed workforce."

A report by experts to the FAA recommended 10 to

12 hours of rest before all shifts as one way to reduce the risk that tired controllers might make mistakes. The panel also said additional time off might be needed before midnight shifts, which don't allow workers to follow normal sleep patterns.

The agreement between the FAA and the union will give controllers 10 hours off between shifts and 12 hours off before and after a midnight shift. They also agreed to limit consecutive overtime assignments.

The FAA has limited the

number of flights in New York and Florida because of a shortage of air traffic controllers. Whitaker said the FAA will hire 1,800 controllers this year and is expanding its ability to hire and train controllers.

Controllers have been in the center of some close calls. The National Transportation Safety Board said in January that a controller made faulty assumptions that led him to clear a FedEx plane to land in Austin, Texas, while a Southwest Airlines jet was taking off from the same runway. □

## State election directors fear the Postal Service can't handle expected crush of mail-in ballots

By STEVE KARNOWSKI

Associated Press

**MINNEAPOLIS (AP)** — State election directors from across the country voiced serious concerns to a top U.S. Postal Service official Tuesday that the system won't be able to handle an expected crush of mail-in ballots in the November election.

Steven Carter, manager of election and government programs for the postal service, attempted to reassure the directors at a meeting in Minneapolis that the system's Office of Inspector General will publish an election mail report next week containing "encouraging" performance numbers for this year so far. "The data that we're seeing showing improvements in the right direction,"

Carter told a conference of the National Association of State Election Directors. "And I think the OIG report is especially complimentary of how we're handling the election now." But state election directors stressed to Carter that they're still worried that too many ballots won't be delivered in time to be counted in



Molly Woon, left, elections director with the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, leads a panel discussion on mail voting on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in Minneapolis, at the summer conference of the National Association of State Election Directors. She's speaking with Steven Carter, manager of election and government programs for the U.S. Postal Service.

Associated Press

November. They based their fears on past problems and a disruptive consolidation of postal facilities across the country that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has put on hold until after the elections. Monica Evans, executive director of the District of Columbia Board of Elections, recounted how she never

received her mail ballot for her own June primary. She ended up voting in person. "We had, at last count, over 80 ballots that were timely mailed as early as May for our June 4 primary election," Evans said, noting that her office could have accepted them as late as June 14, but they still arrived too late.

"We followed up and we just kept getting, 'We don't know what happened. We don't know what happened.'" While former President Donald Trump has complained without foundation that fraudulent mailed ballots cost him a second term in 2020, mail-in voting has become a key component

of each party's strategy to maximize the turnout of their voters in 2024. Now Republicans, sometimes including Trump, see it as necessary for an election that is likely to be decided by razor-thin margins in a handful of swing states. Republicans once were at least as likely as Democrats to vote by mail, but Trump changed the dynamics in 2020 when he began to argue against it months before voting began. Bryan Caskey, the elections director for Kansas who's also the association's incoming president, asked Carter to consider a hypothetical jurisdiction that has a 95% on-time rate for mail deliveries, which he said is better than what almost all states are getting.

"That still means that in the state that sends out 100,000 ballots, that's 5,000 pissed-off, angry voters that are mad about the mail service," Caskey said, adding, "Actual elections are being determined by these delays, and I just want to make sure that you're hearing why we're so upset." □

## Pentagon panel to review Medals of Honor given to soldiers at the Wounded Knee massacre

By LOLITA C. BALDOR  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Defense Department will review the Medals of Honor that were given to 20 U.S. soldiers for their actions in the 1890 battle at Wounded Knee to make sure their conduct merits such an honorable award.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered the review by a special panel of experts after consultation with the White House and the Department of the Interior. Congress recommended such a review in the 2022 defense bill, reflecting a push by some lawmakers to rescind the awards for those who participated in the massacre on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation near Wounded Knee Creek.

An estimated 250 Native

Americans, including women and children, were killed in the fight and at least another 100 were wounded. Medals of Honor were given to 20 soldiers from the 7th Cavalry Regiment, and their awards cite a range of actions including bravery, efforts to rescue fellow troops and actions to "dislodge Sioux Indians" who were concealed in a ravine.

Native American groups, advocates, state lawmakers from South Dakota and a number of Congress members have called for officials to revoke the awards.

Congress apologized in 1990 to the descendants of those killed at Wounded Knee but did not revoke the medals.

In a memo signed last week, Austin said the panel

will review each award "to ensure no soldier was recognized for conduct that did not merit recognition" and if their conduct demonstrated any disqualifying actions. Those could include rape or murder of a prisoner or attacking a non-combatant or someone who had surrendered. Austin said Army Secretary Christine Wormuth must provide the historical records and documentation for the awards for each soldier to the panel by Friday. The panel must provide a written report no later than Oct. 15, recommending that each award be either revoked or retained.

The standards for awarding the Medal of Honor have evolved over time, but the review will evaluate the 20 soldiers' actions based on the rules in place at the

time. Austin said the panel of five experts can consider the context of the overall incident to assess each soldier's actions.

The dispute continues a long history of contentious relations between the tribes in South Dakota and

the government dating to the 1800s. The Wounded Knee massacre was the deadliest, as federal troops shot and killed Lakota men, women and children during a campaign to stop a religious practice known as the Ghost Dance. □



Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin pauses during a meeting with Estonian Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur at the Pentagon, Tuesday, July 23, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

## Judge orders release of Missouri man whose murder conviction was reversed over AG's objections

By JIM SALTER

Associated Press

**ST. LOUIS, Mo. (AP)** — A Missouri judge on Wednesday ordered the release of Christopher Dunn, who has spent 33 years in prison for a killing he has long contended he didn't commit.

St. Louis Circuit Judge Jason Sengheiser's decision came after he overturned Dunn's murder conviction Monday, citing evidence of "actual innocence" in the 1990 killing. He ordered Dunn's immediate release then, but Republican Attorney General Andrew Bailey appealed, and the state Department of Corrections declined to release him.

St. Louis Circuit Attorney Gabe Gore filed a motion Wednesday urging the judge to immediately order Dunn's freedom.

"The Attorney General cannot unilaterally decide to ignore this Court's Order," Gore wrote.

A court filing said an attorney for the Department of Corrections told a lawyer in Gore's office that Bailey



Christopher Dunn, right, listens to his attorney Justin Bonus from New York City during the first day of his hearing to decide whether to vacate his murder conviction, Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at the Carnahan Courthouse in St. Louis.

Associated Press

advised the agency not to release Dunn until the appeal plays out. When told it was improper to ignore a court order, the Department of Corrections attorney "responded that the Attorney General's

Office is legal counsel to the DOC and the DOC would be following the advice of counsel."

On Wednesday, Sengheiser said the prison in Licking had until 6 p.m. EDT to release

Dunn, or he would hold order the warden be held in contempt of court.

Bailey's office didn't respond to a message seeking comment.

Dunn's situation is similar to

what happened to Sandra Hemme.

The 64-year-old woman spent 43 years in prison for the fatal stabbing of a woman in St. Joseph in 1980. A judge on June 14 cited evidence of "actual innocence" and overturned her conviction. She had been the longest-held wrongly incarcerated woman known in the U.S., according to the National Innocence Project, which worked to free Hemme and Dunn. But appeals by Bailey all the way up to the Missouri Supreme Court kept Hemme imprisoned at the Chillicothe Correctional Center. During a court hearing Friday, Judge Ryan Horsman said that if Hemme wasn't released within hours, Bailey himself would have to appear in court with contempt of court on the table. She was released later that day.

The judge also scolded Bailey's office for calling the Chillicothe warden and telling prison officials not to release Hemme after he ordered her to be freed on her own recognizance. □

## Connecticut woman found dead hours before she was to be sentenced for killing her husband



Linda Kosuda-Bigazzi, 70, center, appears at Bristol Superior court, accused of murdering her husband, Dr. Pierluigi Bigazzi, in Bristol, Conn., on Feb. 13, 2018.

Associated Press

By DAVE COLLINS  
Associated Press

A 76-year-old Connecticut woman was found dead at her home Wednesday, hours before she was to be sentenced for killing her husband and hiding his body for months while continuing to collect his pay-

checks. State police said they were investigating the "untimely death" of Linda Kosuda-Bigazzi after being called to her Burlington home for a welfare check shortly after 10:30 a.m. The cause of her death was under investigation, and police and her lawyer did not

disclose any further details. Kosuda-Bigazzi had been scheduled under a plea deal to be sentenced at 2 p.m. Wednesday in Hartford Superior Court to 13 years in prison for the 2017 death of her husband, Dr. Pierluigi Bigazzi, 84. Her lawyer, Patrick Tomaszewicz, said her death was unexpected.

"We were honored to be her legal counsel and did our very best to defend her in a complex case for the past six years," he said in a statement. "She was a very independent woman who was always in control of her own destiny."

Kosuda-Bigazzi pleaded guilty to manslaughter and larceny in March after having been charged with murder in the death of Bigazzi, a professor of laboratory science and pathology at UConn Health. In writings

found at her house, Kosuda-Bigazzi said she killed her husband with a hammer in self-defense, state police said. She was free after having posted more than \$1.5 million for bail.

Police said Kosuda-Bigazzi wrote that she and her husband got into a fight after she told him repairs were needed to their home's backyard deck. She wrote that he came at her with a hammer and she managed to wrestle it away from him during a lengthy struggle, authorities said.

"I hit him just swinging the hammer in any direction + then he was quiet for a few seconds + then he stopped breathing," she wrote, according to investigators. "I just wanted to slow him down. I sat on the floor by the kitchen cabinets across from the stove next to him for a long time."

State troopers found her husband's body in their basement in February 2018 during a wellness check requested by UConn Health staff. It was wrapped in plastic and showed an advanced stage of decomposition, authorities said. The medical examiner said he had died from blunt trauma to his head.

Investigators have said they believe Pierluigi Bigazzi died sometime in July 2017 and that his UConn Health paychecks continued to be deposited into the couple's joint checking account until his body was found.

An internal investigation by UConn resulted in the disciplining of a school medical official who was supposed to monitor Pierluigi Bigazzi's work but had no contact with him in the months before his body was found. □

# A report says 200,000 people were abused in care in New Zealand over decades in 'national disgrace'

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY

Associated Press

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)** — New Zealand's independent inquiry into decades of abuse of children and vulnerable adults released a blistering final report Wednesday finding the country's state agencies and churches failed to prevent, stop or admit to the mistreatment of those in their care.

The scale of abuse was "unimaginable" with an estimated 200,000 people abused over seven decades, many of them Māori, New Zealand's Indigenous people, the report said.

In response to the findings, New Zealand's government agreed for the first time that historical treatment of some children in a notorious state-run hospital amounted to torture, and pledged an apology to all those abused in state, foster and religious care since 1950.

But Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said it was too soon to say how much the government expected to pay in compensation a bill the inquiry said would run to billions of dollars or to promise that officials in-



**People arrive at Parliament in Wellington, New Zealand, on Wednesday, July 24, 2024, for the tabling of a wide-ranging independent inquiry into the abuse of children and vulnerable adults in care over the span of five decades wrote in a blistering final report.**

Associated Press

volved in denying and covering up the abuse would lose their jobs.

The prime minister said the government now heard and believed survivors, and that he was shocked by the findings. He said the government would formally apologize to survivors on Nov. 12.

"We always thought that we were exceptional and different, and the reality is we're not," he said, noting

"a dark and sorrowful day" for the country.

The findings by the Royal Commission — the highest level of inquiry that can be undertaken in New Zealand — capped a six-year investigation that followed two decades of similar probes around the world, as nations struggle to reckon with authorities' transgressions against children removed from their families and placed in care.

The results were a "national disgrace," the inquiry's report said.

Of 650,000 children and vulnerable adults in state, foster, and church care between 1950 and 2019 in a country that today has a population of 5 million nearly a third endured physical, sexual, verbal or psychological abuse. Many more were exploited or neglected.

The figures were likely high-

er. Complaints were disregarded and records were lost or destroyed.

"These gross violations occurred at the same time as Aotearoa New Zealand was promoting itself, internationally and domestically, as a bastion of human rights and as a safe, fair country in which to grow up as a child in a loving family," the inquiry heads wrote, using the country's Māori and English names.

"If this injustice is not addressed, it will remain as a stain on our national character forever," they wrote. Hundreds of survivors and their supporters filled the public gallery Wednesday in Parliament, where lawmakers responded to the findings. They stood and sang a Māori song in an emotional scene.

The report lambasted some senior figures in government and faith institutions, who it said continued to cover up and excuse abuse in public hearings. Many of the worst episodes had long been common knowledge, it said, and officials at the time of the abuse were "either oblivious or indifferent" about protecting children, instead shoring up the reputations of their institutions and abusers. □

## Japan's population falls for the 15th year in a row. Births hit a record low, deaths a record high

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

**TOKYO (AP)** — Japan's total population marked the 15th straight year of decline, according to government data released Wednesday, dropping by more than a half-million people as the population ages and births remain low. Births in Japan hit a record low of 730,000 last year. The 1.58 million deaths last year were also a record high. Japan's population was 124.9 million as of Jan. 1.

The data released by the Internal Affairs Ministry also showed that the 11% increase in foreign residents helped their population

surpass 3 million for the first time.

They now make up nearly 3% of the total population and are mostly of working age from 15 to 64.

Surveys show that younger Japanese are increasingly reluctant to marry or have children, discouraged by bleak job prospects, the high cost of living which rises at a faster pace than salaries and a gender-biased corporate culture that adds a burden only on women and working mothers.

The government earmarked 5.3 trillion yen (\$34 billion) as part of the 2024 budget to fund incentives

for young couples to have more children, such as increasing subsidies for childcare and education, and is expected to spend 3.6 trillion yen (\$23 billion) in tax money annually over the next three years.

Experts say the measures are largely meant for married couples who plan to have or who already have children, and don't address the growing number of young people reluctant to get married.

Japan's population is projected to fall by about 30%, to 87 million by 2070, when four out of every 10 people will be 65 years of age or older. □



**People holding parasols sit on the bench under an intense sun at a park in Tokyo, July 8, 2024.**

Associated Press

## Puerto Rico finalizes details of upcoming referendum on political status amid criticism over cost

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Plans to hold a nonbinding referendum on Puerto Rico's political status came under scrutiny Wednesday for its multimillion-dollar cost as election officials announced the order and description of choices on the upcoming ballot.

The \$1.3 million referendum that critics have described as "inconsequential" will feature three choices in the following order: independence with free association; statehood and independence. Under the free association option, issues like foreign affairs, U.S. citizenship and use of the U.S. dollar would be negotiated.

The order of options was set following a televised drawing held Wednesday that was supervised by judges at Puerto Rico's elections commission.

Regardless of the outcome of the referendum scheduled for the Nov. 5 general elections, the island's status will not change. That would require approval from the U.S. Congress and the U.S. president.

Jessika Padilla, the elec-



The Puerto Rican flag flies in front of the Capitol building in San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 29, 2015.

Associated Press

tions commission's alternate president, said the agency had an original budget of \$6.2 million for the upcoming elections but was awarded \$7.5 million, with the additional funds going toward the referendum.

Critics note that Puerto Rico is emerging from the biggest public debt restructuring in U.S. history after announcing in 2015 that it was unable to pay a more

than \$70 billion debt load following decades of mismanagement, corruption and excessive borrowing. Jesús Manuel Ortiz, leader of the main opposition Popular Democratic Party, said in recent days that the referendum is "a totally unjustified expense at a time when the (island) is experiencing a real crisis in the cost of living."

Meanwhile, leaders of the Puerto Rican Indepen-

dence Party have gone to court to challenge the referendum.

The island's Supreme Court issued a resolution last week stating it would hear the case.

Puerto Rico Gov. Pedro Pierluisi of the pro-statehood Progressive New Party had announced on July 1 that he would hold a referendum and has defended his decision. He has repeatedly said the island's

3.2 million U.S. citizens lack equality and noted they are not allowed to vote in U.S. general elections.

The referendum was announced a month after Pierluisi, a Democrat, lost in his party's primary to Jennifer González, a Republican who is Puerto Rico's representative in Congress. The two ran together in 2020.

Politics in Puerto Rico are defined by the island's political status, so it's common to find both Democrats and Republicans in the same party.

González is a supporter of former President Donald Trump, who has said he doesn't support statehood for Puerto Rico. González, however, has pledged to push for statehood if she wins in November.

Puerto Rico already has held six referendums, the most recent one in 2020, when voters were asked a single question: "Should Puerto Rico be admitted immediately into the Union as a State?"

Nearly 53% voted in favor of statehood, with only about half of registered voters participating in that year's general elections. □

## Eluned Morgan will be Wales' first female leader as she takes over a troubled governing party

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Wales is set to get its first female

leader after Eluned Morgan was chosen Wednesday to lead the governing Welsh Labour Party as it tries to

emerge from scandal and division.

Morgan succeeds First Minister Vaughan Gething, who stepped down last week as party leader amid acrimony and a campaign donation scandal.

Morgan, 57, is currently the Welsh health minister and was the only candidate to replace Gething. She was announced as the new party leader on Wednesday and will become first minister after a confirmation vote in Wales' parliament, the Senedd.

The quick change of leader avoids a leadership contest and enables Welsh Labour to project unity after the chaotic end of Gething's tenure, which lasted just

over three months.

"We've been through a difficult time, we're now looking to the future," Morgan said. "I don't think it's been a pretty picture in the last few weeks. I think we've got to fess up and accept that's the situation."

Gething, the son of a Welsh father and a Zambian mother, made history in March when he was elected by Welsh lawmakers to head the Cardiff-based administration, becoming the first Black leader of a government in the U.K.

He faced criticism for accepting 200,000 pounds (\$255,000) in donations during his leadership campaign from a recycling company whose owner

had been found guilty of environmental offenses and breaching health and safety regulations. Another company with the same owner was given a loan by the government-owned Development Bank of Wales in 2023 when Gething was economy minister. In June, Gething lost a nonbinding no-confidence vote in the Senedd, but said then that he would stay in his job.

He resigned last week after four members of his government quit in protest.

Wales, which has a population of about 3 million, is one of four parts of the United Kingdom, along with England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. □



Eluned Morgan meets with members of the public at the Caer Heritage Centre in Caerau, Ely, Wales, Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

Associated Press

## Palapa usage yet again an issue for beach goers



**The issue of tourists wanting to use palapas (thatched beach umbrellas) on the beach has become a recurring problem in Aruba. This week, on a popular tourist Facebook group, the conversation again turned to the topic of palapas and whether hotels should charge for their usage.**

This topic has come up several times between tourists and locals in Aruba. In June 2023, Aruba Today's sister paper Bon Dia Aruba addressed this issue in an article titled "It remains unclear if the use of palapas is public or

must be rented." The article discussed whether palapas are free or if they belong to a hotel and are exclusively for hotel guests. At that time, there were even reports of people being intimidated and frightened, being told they could not use the palapas without renting them – sometimes even the police had to intervene.

This time, in the mentioned Facebook group, a user with the initials G. M. posted about an email received from a hotel, calling its content "outrageous." In the email, of which the user

posted a screenshot, the hotel informed them: "We have palapas and umbrellas for rent. For the palapas, you must make a reservation in advance, for the umbrellas you can just inform the Pool and Beach attendant. The price for the palapas ranges from \$18 to \$30 depending on the location. The umbrellas cost \$40."

"Do you have to pay to stand under a coconut tree umbrella on the beach?" the user questioned. "So in other words, if I want to be on the beach and in the shade, I have to pay? We have never

experienced this at any other tropical beach resort."

As in previous instances, many users in the group reacted, generating more than 200 comments.

User J.P. stated that "there have been ongoing issues with this for months and months. Any palapa on the beach is public. They do not belong to any hotel or resort. Whoever gets there first gets it. There is no charge. Chairs for rent, yes. Please show this letter to the police. The police will go to the hotel in question and give them a warning."

Meanwhile, C. R. clarified that the palapas on hotel property are private. "But those are the ones near the [hotel]. Those beyond the blue mark are on public beach."

Amidst the controversy, AHATA CEO Tisa LaSorte provided a comment to clarify the situation, stating that the hotel in question "has a strip that is their leasehold. Public beaches has a precarious permit that allows usage and the placing of chairs, etc., but not for charging."

In 2022, Bon Dia Aruba sought for clarification on the palapa situation. As is known, beaches in Aruba are public



and do not belong to any hotel. Therefore, palapas on the beach are also considered public and can be used by anyone who arrives first. In some cases, this is not applicable if the hotel's property line extends to a certain point on the beach or if the hotel has reached an agreement with the government to privatize the use of the palapas, allowing the hotel itself to build the palapas.

The lack of clarity on this topic has caused a lot of confusion and frustration among both tourists and locals who use the palapas to protect themselves from Aruba's strong sun while enjoying their day by the sea.

Given that this situation continues to arise and cause frustration among tourists, it would be beneficial for the government to find a way to distinguish public palapas from private ones and thereby provide more clarity for users. □

## Aruba Tourism Authority honored a loyal visitor at Aruba Beach Club!

**The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing a Distinguished Visitor of Aruba. The honoree was respec-**

**tively honored with a certificate for her years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.**



The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

**The three levels of honor are as follows:**

Distinguished Visitor (10+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35+ years consecutively visiting Aruba)

**The honoree was:**

Distinguished Visitor  
Ms. Louise Werner from Saugerties New York, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing

the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Aruba Beach Club bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented her with gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aruba as her favorite vacation destination, as her home away from home.

**The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:**

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba makes you feel safe.
- "Family and friends we meet here"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for her continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

**Papillon**  
RESTAURANT  
*FRESH MUSSELS!*  
IN SEASON  
[WWW.PAPILLONARUBA.COM](http://WWW.PAPILLONARUBA.COM)



## Papillon Restaurant: A Culinary Jewel in Palm Beach



For over 15 years, Papillon Restaurant has been a beacon of culinary excellence in Palm Beach, consistently delivering outstanding food and impeccable service. Conveniently situated across from the Hilton, yet discreetly tucked away from the main road, Papillon offers a serene and beautifully decorated setting that promises an unforgettable dining experience.

### News Flash: Fresh Dutch Mussels Arriving This Weekend!

This weekend, Papillon is excited to announce the arrival of fresh Dutch mus-

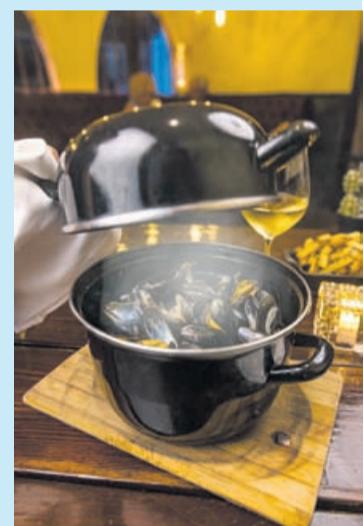
sels. A delicacy cherished by many, these mussels are a must-try, prepared in the traditional manner and served in a classic mussel pot. Accompanied by hand-cut fries, this dish is a perfect blend of simplicity and sophistication that will leave your taste buds craving for more.

Given the limited supply of these delicious mussels, it is highly recommended to make a reservation to ensure you don't miss out on this special treat. The combination of fresh seafood and Papillon's culinary expertise guarantees a meal to remember.



At Papillon, their commitment to quality extends beyond food to an extensive wine selection. The carefully curated wine list features an array of exquisite wines that perfectly complement the menu. Whether you're a wine connoisseur or simply looking to enhance your dining experience, the team is more than happy to assist in finding the perfect pairing.

Papillon Restaurant offers extraordinary food, a delightful atmosphere, and exceptional service that come together to create



a dining experience unlike any other. This establishment looks forward to welcoming guests and making each visit truly special. □

## Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

### Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa\* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflam-

mation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

### Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take

arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

### Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the

world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pressure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan\* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

\*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

\*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen. □

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## Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

### The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10+years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20+years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35+years consecutively visiting Aruba)

### The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors

Mr. Dennis & Mrs. Karen McCarthy from Somerville Massachusetts, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees



were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beach.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba is very safe.
- "Beautiful place to visit with family"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

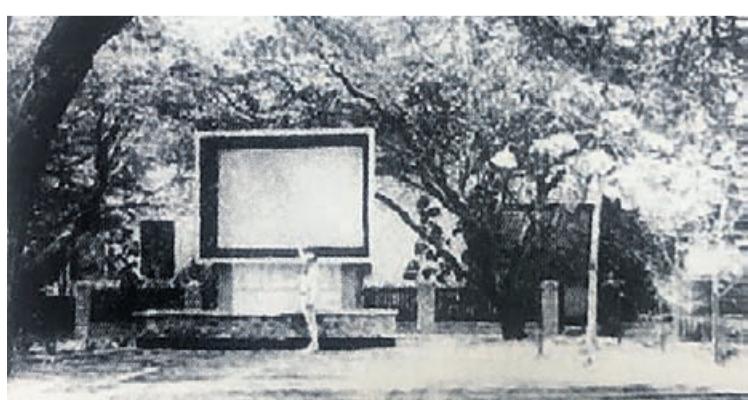
## Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters

(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theaters. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer.



This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now



where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around



2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi. □

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.



**For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.**

#### Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the casca-

bel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

#### Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting. These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color. The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and

## Unique fauna of Aruba

lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

#### Prikichi

##### (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.

The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

#### Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in

a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/> □



## In celebrating 200 years of Oranjestad... Learn about the history of the famous town hall!

(Oranjestad)—If you've ever taken a stroll through main street Oranjestad, you may have stumbled upon a big green house with beautiful colonial design. This legendary house, now used as a town hall for civil marriages, was once owned by a wealthy doctor and formed part of the elite neighborhood in Oranjestad.

Jacobo Eloy Arends was an Aruban physician, and he lived in Oranjestad during the 1920s. In 1922, he married Maria Monica Lacle, the daughter of well-known business man at the time, Adriaan Lacle. The two lived a posh life in the city center, and their mansion—once the center for neighborhood parties—now serves as a public town hall for civil marriages and is a cultural monument on the island.



The house was designed by architect Chibi Wever, and constructed under the leadership of famous master carpenter, Dada Picus, who

was famous at the time for his construction of beautiful buildings.

The construction of the house started once Jacobo and Maria got engaged. It is said that during the time of construction, Maria was not allowed to see the building nor be anywhere near the construction site. It wasn't until after her honeymoon that she saw the completed mansion for the first time, furnished entirely by her sisters-in-law.

The mansion also contained the doctor's office, as well as a pharmacy. After the death of Jacobo, the house was inherited by his son, an Aruban dentist, who converted Jacobo's office into his own dental practice. Over the years, the house was rented and used by third parties, but eventually fell into disrepair, as the maintenance cost became too high to cover.

The land was sold to Land



Aruba in 1986, but it did not see a renovation until 1997. Nowadays, it serves to host weddings, and is attached to a modern building situated behind—the Aruban census office.

Jacobo and Maria's mansion was situated in front of another famous mansion, owned by Jacobo's brother Frederico Maximiliaan (Machi) Arends. Frederico was married to Veneranda (whom the mansion was named after). Their house was also constructed by Dada Picus, utilizing Veneranda's design

vision that was inspired by a house she saw in Cartagena, Colombia.

Nowadays, this mansion lies in ruins. However, the Aruban government recently announced its official restoration, with plans to convert this monument into a governmental office and public space for visitors of Oranjestad. □

**Source and pictures credited to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers.**



## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.**

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting

photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □



**CROSSWORD**

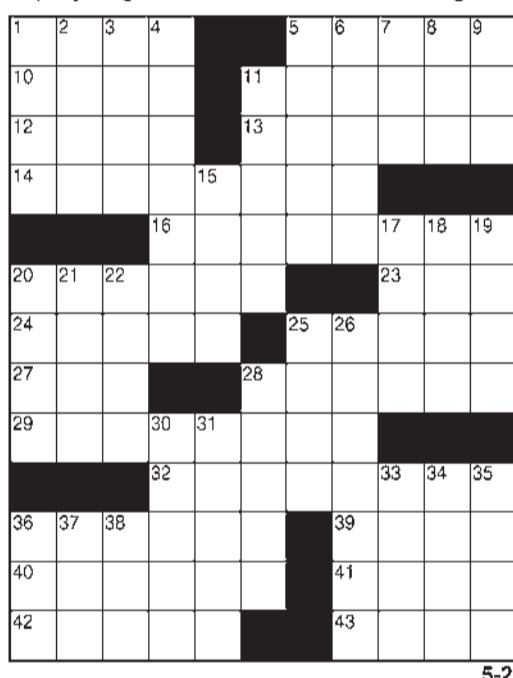
By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**

- 1 Weary sigh
- 5 Dull fellows
- 10 Rife with life
- 11 Form couples
- 12 Writer Wiesel
- 13 Vim
- 14 Woodwind instrument
- 16 Stringed instrument
- 20 Repair site
- 23 Count start
- 24 South American plain
- 25 Plumbing problems
- 27 Little rascal
- 28 Acts spoiled
- 29 Percussion instrument
- 32 Brass instrument
- 36 Abstain
- 39 Big-scale movie
- 40 Juice choice
- 41 Gambling city
- 42 Pay
- 43 Checkout act



Yesterday's answer



5-2

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-2

CRYPTOQUOTE

N F Z      B Z U S      O G C O N U      X P

O - C O E E G P      C K S V      G F R P .

— Q. V. GOCIPMAP

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: MAY IS THE MONTH OF EXPECTATION, THE MONTH OF WISHES, THE MONTH OF HOPE. — EMILY BRONTE

**Cruise ship Schedule: July 01 - July 30 2024**

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH
THU	04	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C 1
TUE	09	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	20.00	B 1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C 1
WED	10	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C 1
TUE	16	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C 1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	I 1
WED	17	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C 1
TUE	23	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C 1
TUE	30	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C 1

**Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba**

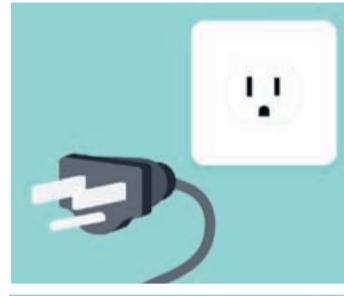
Supermarket hours



(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Drinking water



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

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Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

# Monday breaks the record for the hottest day ever on Earth



A firefighter hoses down the garage of Noel Piri's home that was destroyed by the Hawarden Fire in Riverside, Calif., on Sunday, July 21, 2024.

Associated Press

By SIBI ARASU and SETH BORENSTEIN

Associated Press

Driven by oceans that won't cool down, an unseasonably warm Antarctica and worsening climate change, Earth's record hot streak dialed up this week, making Sunday, then Monday, the hottest days humans have measured, according to the European climate service. There's a good chance that when the data comes in for Tuesday, it will be three straight days of global record breaking heat, said Carlo Buontempo, the director of the European climate service Copernicus. "These peaks are not normally isolated," he said. Provisional satellite data published by Copernicus on Wednesday shows that Monday was 0.06 degrees Celsius (0.1 degree Fahrenheit) hotter than Sunday, which was .01 degrees Celsius hotter (0.2 degrees Fahrenheit) than the previous hottest day on record, July 6, 2023. □

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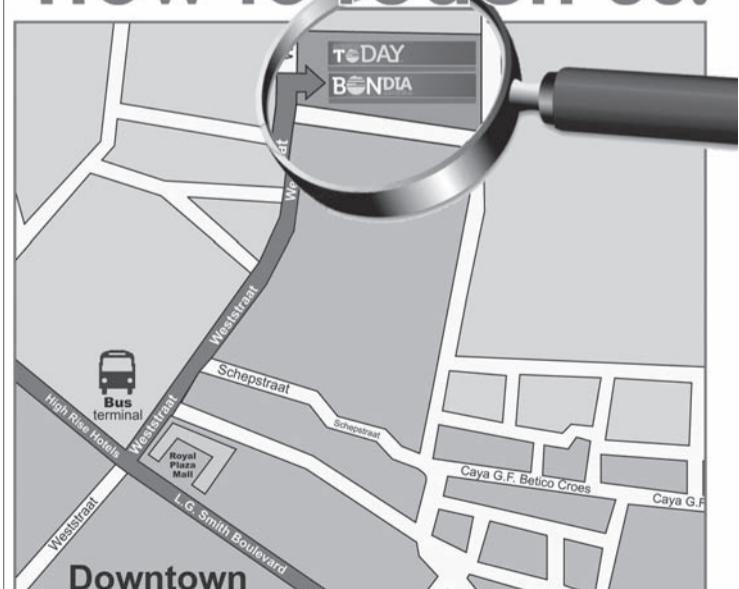
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## Editor

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## Editors

Pilar Flores  
Richard Brooks  
Angenette Figuereo

## Sales

Mark Gomes  
Sulaika Croes

## Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

## Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

## Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22  
T: 582-7800  
E: news@arubatoday.com  
W: www.arubatoday.com  
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San Nicolas

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### PHARMACY ON DUTY

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Central : Tel.585 1965

San Nicolas:

Seroe Preto:Tel. 584 4833

### OTHER

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### EMERGENCY

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Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

### TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous  
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Fundacion Contra Violencia  
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes  
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Child Abuse Prevention  
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# 'Deadpool & Wolverine' is here to shake up the Marvel Cinematic Universe

By LINDSEY BAHR

AP Film Writer

Shawn Levy is no novice when it comes to rumors around his projects. Years on "Stranger Things" taught him how to tune out the noise. Yet even he's found himself astonished by the sheer volume of speculation around "Deadpool & Wolverine." "The rumors around this movie are overwhelming," Levy told The Associated Press earlier this year. "But so is the anticipation, which is a nice situation."

Anticipation might be an understatement for a movie that is poised to be the theatrical event of the summer, when it opens on Thursday. The first trailer, which aired during the Super Bowl, was viewed a record 365 million times online in its first 24 hours. The second broke another record for the most "F-bombs" in the MCU (six in less than three minutes).

Much of that excitement is because this film marks the first time Ryan Reynolds' foul-mouthed Deadpool/Wade Wilson and Hugh Jackman's Wolverine are being folded into Kevin Feige's Marvel Cinematic Universe. Both properties existed previously under the 21st Century Fox banner. When Disney acquired the studio's film and TV assets in early 2019, Wolverine had already died in "Logan," a third "Deadpool" was in development and Marvel was still firmly in the PG-13 business, a rating that allows for only one F-bomb.

On a call with investors as the deal was going through, Walt Disney Company CEO Bob Iger was already reassuring people that a Disney Deadpool would remain R-rated. Soon after, Reynolds also posted a photo on social media showing his character with Mickey Mouse ears on a yellow school bus labeled "Disney." The meta humor, it seemed, was also firmly intact.

But what would the story be? Levy was announced as the film's director in early 2022, coming in as a fan of Reynolds' snarky tone and fourth wall breaking.

"There was no way I was going to reinvent a wheel,



This image released by 20th Century Studios/Marvel Studios shows Hugh Jackman as Wolverine/Logan, left, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool/Wade Wilson in a scene from "Deadpool & Wolverine." Associated Press

a tonal wheel, that works so beautifully," Levy said. "Both Disney and Marvel, up and down the food chain, empowered Ryan and I to make this movie exactly as we dreamed."

#### WAIT, HOW IS WOLVERINE HERE?

Things really started to really take shape when Jackman signed on that fall, however. It would mark the first time that the characters would be together in a movie since 2009's "X-Men Origins: Wolverine." In the years since, Reynolds and Jackman have staged a very tongue in cheek, very funny "feud" with one another on social media, dancing around the idea of sharing the big screen again.

The dream seemed to have died after "Logan" and Jackman's retirement as Wolverine. But death is never exactly final in the multiverse, and, they promised, this film would not interfere with "Logan." "It's a really interesting duo," Levy said. "They're built for huge conflict with each other because they're so different individually. But that makes for a very interesting story, because the best two hander stories, whether it's 'Midnight Run' or '48 Hours' or 'Planes, Trains and Automobiles,' yes, it's littered with conflict. But it's ultimately about something more as well and that's

what audiences will see." The dynamic was also fueled by the real-life friendship between Levy, Jackman and Reynolds that goes back a decade off screen and includes films like "Free Guy" and "Real Steel."

"The real benefit of being friends off set is that you can try crazy stuff without fear of failing. Because some of it won't work and that will be momentarily embarrassing, but if you're among friends, it's okay to make a fool of yourself in the pursuit of something surprising and something unexpected," Levy said.

"This movie is filled with moments, both comedic and character based, that we didn't expect and were the result of a freedom that that came from being friends." At the New York premiere Monday, Jackman and Reynolds were definitely in friend mode, praising one another with no snark.

"(Ryan's) exactly as you think," Jackman said. "An extraordinary man. Generous, humble brilliant and a great friend."

Reynolds added that Jackman was "someone who operated in a completely different way, did everything through the prism of genuine kindness, diligence, hard work. And that was modeled to me in 2008 when we did

our first movie together. And we've been best buddies ever since."

#### IT'S SUMMER. NO HOMEWORK REQUIRED.

The Marvel multiverse has gotten a bit overwhelming in recent years for the more casual fans who may have seen most of the films but only dabbled in the Disney+ offerings that regularly introduce new concepts and characters that eventually find their way into the films.

"Deadpool & Wolverine," for instance, uses the Time Variance Authority (TVA) a major part of "Loki" but new to the movies to help get Deadpool to the MCU. But Levy promises that enjoyment of "Deadpool & Wolverine" requires no bingeing or studying beforehand.

"I was a good student in school. I'll do my homework as an adult. But I am definitely not looking to do homework when I go to the movies," Levy said.

"I very much made this film with certainly a healthy respect and gratitude towards the rabid fan base that has peak fluency in the mythology and lore of these characters and this world. But I didn't want to presume that. This movie is built for entertainment, with no obligation to come prepared with prior research."

**OH, RIGHT, THE MOVIE...**

So, what about what's IN the film? Well, that's something that Levy won't really talk about. Until Monday's premiere, reporters were only allowed to see 40 minutes; Soon the floodgates will open and spoilers will take over social media.

But "Deadpool & Wolverine" hasn't needed to tease out plotlines to stoke enthusiasm. The fans are already there and ready, whether or not Taylor Swift is involved (by all accounts, she's not).

Marvel has had some Phase 5 bumps, with films like "The Marvels" underperforming financially and others overwhelming critics. And outside of the MCU, the industry is feeling the pains of so-called "superhero fatigue" that has sent DC back to the drawing boards to start anew. But "Deadpool & Wolverine" is

not to be underestimated. Critics have been largely positive too. AP's Krysta Fauria wrote in her review that the film "leans into its genre more than the franchise's first two movies." She cautions that the plot starts to feel a little aimless toward the end, but that, "The bloody but comedic final fight scene is enough to perk viewers back up for the last act, solidifying the film's identity as a fun, generally well-made summer movie."

And it could be the first MCU movie since "Spider-Man: No Way Home" to crack \$1 billion, which would also put it in the running to become the highest grossing R-rated film of all time. That title currently belongs to "Joker" with its \$1.08 billion. It's currently tracking to open around \$160 million, but some bullish analysts are forecasting as high as \$200 million. To beat "Barbie's" opening last year, it has to surpass \$162 million.

"Audiences are hungry for a great time at the movies," Levy said. "They want to be delighted, transported and entertained. And when they are given that, whether it's 'Barbie,' 'Oppenheimer' or any number of other recent movies, they show up."

He added: "The movie is built for audience delight. I think that (they're) in for a very fun ride." □

# Noah Lyles looks to be the star of the Olympics, and bring all of track along for the ride

By EDDIE PELLS and PAT GRAHAM  
AP Sports Writers

**PARIS (AP)** — Winner. Entertainer. History maker.

By the time the Paris Olympics are over, Noah Lyles hopes to be all of that, and maybe more. The confident 26-year-old sprinter thinks he can win medals, break records and bring the entire sport of track and field onto America's screens for more than 10 days every four years.

These are audacious goals. Winning the 100 and 200 meters and maybe a relay or two would put him in a category with Usain Bolt, Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson, to name a few. Making track popular again that's a whole different, and more complex, mission, and one Lyles has not shown any fear of tackling.

"I want to see everybody be able to see the stories we create, the moments that are shared, and the big events that we have," Lyles said. "And we need personalities to be able to show that. Because just going out there and winning



Noah Lyles celebrates after winning the men's 200-meter final during the U.S. Track and Field Olympic Team Trials Saturday, June 29, 2024, in Eugene, Ore.

Associated Press

doesn't mean everybody's watching."

Using behind-the-scenes documentaries to draw new fans

Lyles has a two-pronged strategy. The first part is dominating the sprints. That second part is becoming a must-see personality who transcends both track and sports, the way Bolt did.

Lyles has spent the last year or more laying the groundwork for that second part. He has opened up his life for two behind-the-scenes documentaries. The first, "Untitled: The Noah Lyles Project," came out last year.

The second, a Netflix production called "SPRINT" that debuted this summer,

features Lyles as a main character among a number of Olympians including Sha'Carri Richardson and the stable of Jamaica's fastest women sprinters. When he's not on TV, Lyles has curated a look outside or make that coming into the track. He is making his "walk-in" to meets an event, arriv-

ing in everything from a green sweater with church-window-shaped cut outs, to black leather pants to the tailored navy suit with the signature Adidas stripes down the side of the slacks he wore to U.S. Olympic trials.

There, he was greeted by Snoop Dogg, who carried a briefcase they opened for a big reveal of Lyles' track kit for the 100-meter final.

"It's to keep hype," Lyles explained. "If you're generating excitement and hype, it's like, 'What's in the briefcase?' You want to know what's in the briefcase."

Lyles took a notable dig at the NBA

Getting others to follow his lead in a sport filled with solo artists is only part of the mountain Lyles is trying to climb.

Another part might have been best illustrated last year when, while articulating his vision for track after completing the 100-200 double at world championships, he made an off-hand comparison between track and the NBA. □

## Katie Ledecky hopes for clean races at Paris Olympics in the aftermath of the Chinese doping scandal

By JAY COHEN  
AP Sports Writer

**PARIS (AP)** — Katie Ledecky is hoping for clean races at the Olympics. Hope was just about as far as she was willing to go on Wednesday.

The U.S. swimming star is looking to add to her six individual gold medals when she races in the 400, 800 and 1,500 meters at the Paris Games. Her schedule begins with the loaded 400 freestyle on Saturday, which also includes Ariane Titmus and Summer McIntosh.

The 27-year-old Ledecky is competing in her fourth Summer Olympics, but it's the first one since a doping scandal involving nearly two dozen Chinese swimmers who tested positive for a banned substance

ahead of the Tokyo Games and were allowed to compete with no ramifications. The controversy has raised major concerns about the seriousness of anti-doping efforts.

"I hope everyone here is going to be competing clean this week," Ledecky said. "But what really matters also is: Were they training clean? Hopefully, that's been the case."

Hopefully, there's been even testing around the world."

There is an ongoing U.S. investigation of the suspected doping by the Chinese swimmers drawing the ire of the International Olympic Committee. While awarding the 2034 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City on Wednesday, the IOC pushed Utah officials to do

what they can to stop the FBI probe.

"I think everyone's heard what the athletes think," Ledecky said. "They want transparency. They want further answers to the questions that still remain. At this point, we're here to race. We're going to race whoever's in the lanes next to us. We're not the ones paid to do the testing, so we hope that the people that are follow their own rules. That applies now and into the future."

Ledecky won gold in the 800 free in each of the previous three Olympics. She also won the 200 free and 400 in Rio de Janeiro, and the 1,500 in Tokyo. She remains a dominant force in the 1,500, but she is facing a more difficult challenge for the rest of her schedule

in Paris.

She was handed her first loss in an individual event at the Olympics when Titmus won the 400 in Tokyo. McIntosh is a prime contender for both the 400 and



Katie Ledecky swims during a Women's 800 freestyle preliminary heat, June 21, 2024, at the US Swimming Olympic Trials in Indianapolis.

Associated Press



Pittsburgh Pirates starting pitcher Martín Pérez delivers during the first inning of a baseball game against the St. Louis Cardinals in Pittsburgh, Wednesday, July 24, 2024.

Associated Press

## Pérez works 6 scoreless innings, Tellez splashes a homer into the river as Pirates top Cardinals 5-0

By WES CROSBY

Associated Press

**PITTSBURGH (AP)** — Martín Pérez pitched six scoreless innings, Rowdy Tellez homered into the Allegheny River and the Pittsburgh Pirates beat St. Louis 5-0 on Wednesday to take two of three games from the Cardinals.

Pérez (2-5) allowed four hits, three in his final two innings, and walked five with two strikeouts. The 33-year-old left-hander entered with a 5.61 ERA after allowing 11 runs in 8 1/3 innings over his last two starts.

"I got confidence," Pérez said. "It doesn't matter. Ev-

ery outing I'm always going to trust my stuff. That happened today. I was able to compete and throw a lot of pitches in the strike zone."

Tellez chased Matthew Liberatore (2-3) at the start of the fourth inning by sending a fastball 447 feet into the river beyond the wall in right field, extending the Pirates' lead to five runs.

"It was a good day. It was a good win," Tellez said. "Martín pitched his butt off. We needed that going into this road trip. It puts us in a good spot."

Liberatore allowed five runs on four hits in three innings,

walking three and striking out three.

The Pirates, who have won eight of their last 10 games, took two of three from the Phillies and Cardinals in their first two series after the All-Star break. They are third in the NL Central, one game behind second-place St. Louis.

"Very important. We get the best team in baseball and then we get the team that's ahead of us in the division," Pittsburgh manager Derek Shelton said. "So, to go 4-2 on the homestand is off to a good start. ... We have to continue to play well, but very proud of how we responded coming out of the break."

The Cardinals, 1/2 game ahead of the Padres for the third wild card, stranded 11 runners and slipped to 3-3 since coming out of the break.

Connor Joe capped a four-run second inning with a two-out, two-run double to left-center, a liner that center fielder Dylan Carlson failed to bring in on a dive. Joe, batting third, picked up his first RBIs since June 11.

Tellez opened the scoring with an RBI single to center. Liberatore walked Andrew McCutchen with the bases loaded to make it 2-0.

"'Libby' just wasn't sharp early," Cardinals manager Oliver Marmol said. "You look at the first 10 hitters, three-ball count in five out of 10. Walked three, hit one. Settled in after that."

Pedro Pagés and Masyn Winn each hit a two-out single before Alec Burleson walked for St. Louis in the fifth inning. Pérez got Willson Contreras to ground to third, leaving the bases loaded.

Contreras flew out to right in the seventh, ending the inning with runners on second and third.

"We didn't come through with the big hit," Marmol said. "Offensively, we just didn't do enough. ... It's been all year. We're battling through it. □



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